Commuter News

High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes coming in '94 on I-80.

Summer 1992

Commuters fight congestion on I-80 every day. High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes will move more people in fewer vehicles.

Q. How will two people in a car travel faster than one on I-80 between Route 15 and I-287?

A. They will drive on new HOV lanes in 1994.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation will establish high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes **during weekday rush hours** on I-80 in 1994 when the widening of I-80 in Morris County will be finished.

Then, on weekdays only, the inside left lane **eastbound during morning rush** hours and the inside left lane **westbound during evening rush** hours will be designated as HOV lanes. Cars carrying two or more people are considered HOVs and may use the priority lanes during these hours.

A recent study done for the NJDOT predicted that 900 to 1,500 carpools, vanpools and buses would use the HOV lanes on I-80, which would save 2,250 to 3,750 people approximately 10 to 15 minutes per trip.

Why put HOV lanes on I-80?

If you travel I-80 regularly, you have experienced traffic congestion five or six hours a day. Not only is the congestion frustrating to you as a motorist, it also slows down the truck freight service that is critical to New Jersey's economy. But, most importantly, the increased auto emissions from traffic congestion makes the air unhealthy and contributes to New Jersey's failure to comply with federal clean air standards. This could cost us valuable federal highway money.

Will these HOV lanes really work?

A recently completed study predicted that HOV lanes could operate successfully on I-80 between Route 15 and I-287. The study also found that HOV lanes on I-80 would be cost-

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Public opinion on building special lanes for buses and carpools on I-80

Favor strongly	
Morris	46%
Somerset/Piscataway	40%
Favor somewhat	
Morris	27%
Somerset/Piscataway	31%
Oppose somewhat	
Morris	10%
Somerset/Piscataway	12%
Oppose strongly	
Morris	13%
Somerset/Piscataway	15%

Source: June 1991 survey

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New Jersey Department of Transportation

Governor Jim Florio

Commissioner Tom Downs

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effective, enforceable and an important component of ridesharing programs already under way.

Residents living along the I-80 corridor who were surveyed in a public opinion poll said they believe that HOV lanes are an effective means of fighting congestion.

And approximately 72 percent of those surveyed said they "favor strongly" or "favor somewhat" building special lanes for buses and carpools.

The Route 495 priority bus lane approach to the Lincoln Tunnel in Hudson County is a good example of how well such a lane can operate. It moves 725 buses carrying the equivalent of 34,000 single passenger cars per hour! The Route 55 HOV lanes in Orange County, CA, move about 1,700 carpools carrying 4,000 people each hour. Clearly, HOV lanes can turn a congested roadway into a free-flowing highway, especially during rush hours.

Successful HOV lanes already operate in suburban areas similar to Morris County in Marin and Santa Clara Counties, CA; Hartford, CT and Virginia Beach, VA.

Who was consulted?

A special Steering Committee closely monitored the study conducted by the NJDOT and its consultant. Its members came from NJDOT, Federal Highway Administration, New Jersey Turnpike Authority, Morris County DOT, NJ TRANSIT, Somerset County Planning Board, Morris County Rides (MC RIDES), New Jersey State Police and North Jersey Transportation Coordinating Council.

The Committee reviewed all of the study and opinion poll data, along with the comments made by more than 20 executives and media leaders in the area, before recommending HOV lanes on I-80.

Why not add another general use lane?

HOV lanes are a valuable traffic management tool because they can move more people in fewer vehicles more quickly through congested areas than general use lanes could.

HOV lanes can offer shorter travel time to people who ride in buses, carpools and vanpools. Reduced congestion also means cleaner air due to reduced pollution from car emissions.

Because New Jersey is one of a handful of states where air quality does not meet federal standards, the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments will bring about major changes in the way the state does business. According to this law, unless New Jersey improves its air quality, it could lose federal dollars for road and public transit improvements.

Congestion-busters

Share the ride on I-80!

Form carpools and vanpools.

For free assistance, call:
1-800-245-POOL

If your destination is Somerset County, call RideWise of Raritan Valley, 908-704-1011.

If your destination is Morris County, or, if you would like information on the I-80 Vanpool Subsidy Program, call MC RIDES, 201-267-7600.

If your destination is Bergen County, call Meadowlink, 201-460-1095.

Park and ride.

Morris County

Rockaway Townsquare Mall Park & Ride – located on I-80 and Mount Hope Ave., Rockaway Township. NJ TRANSIT bus service is available.

Lakeland Bus Lines Park & Ride – located on East Blackwell Street (Route 513), Rockaway Township. Bus service is available.

Netcong Park & Ride – located on Main St. at the rail station. NJ TRANSIT rail service is available.

Washington Township Park & Ride – located in the median of Route 46. Lakeland Bus service is available.

Sussex County

Blue Heron Road Park & Ride – located at Blue Heron Road and Route 15. Lakeland bus service is available.

Sparta Park & Ride – located at the Sparta Township Municipal Building. Lakeland bus service is available.

For NJ TRANSIT bus routes and schedules, call (from 6 a.m. to midnight): In NJ: 800-772-2222; Out of state: 201-762-5100.

For Lakeland Bus Lines information call 201-366-0600.

Are other improvements planned for this area?

The Steering Committee recommended that HOV lanes be provided around the long traffic backups on the ramps that connect I-287 to I-80. The study predicted that HOV lanes on these ramps would save carpoolers 5 to 10 minutes for each commute trip.

In addition, motorists will receive up-to-the-minute traffic information through new electronic message boards and other high technological traffic devices installed by the NJDOT so they can adjust their route to avoid traffic congestion hot spots.

Will other highways have HOV lanes?

It's a possibility. Studies are already under way on the feasibility of establishing HOV lanes on I-287 in Somerset County and the New Jersey Turnpike from Exits 8A to 16E.

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